

Message Text

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ORIGIN HEW-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 OES-07 AGRE-00 EB-08 COME-00
L-03 /037 R

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DHEW/PHS/OASH/OIH:RFISCHER
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EUR/NE:CSCHALLER
EUR/NE:WNEWLIN

-----045972 072139Z /61

P 072023Z APR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

UNCLAS STATE 089779

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EIND, SWEL, TBIO, XX

SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL FOOD LABELING SURVEY

1. FDA REQUESTS ASSISTANCE OF ADDRESSEE POSTS IN PERFORM-
ING A SURVEY OF TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED NATIONS REGARDING
THEIR LAWS, REGULATIONS, PRACTICES AND OTHER RELATED INFOR-
MATION BEARING UPON CARBOHYDRATE LABELLING.

2. THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE IS UNDERTAKING A COMPRE-
HENSIVE REVIEW OF FOOD LABELING AND THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS
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WHICH GOVERN SUCH LABELING. THE PURPOSE IS THREE-FOLD:
(1) TO IMPROVE PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO CONSUMERS WHICH
RELATES SPECIFICALLY TO HEALTH, E.G., SODIUM AND CHOLE-
STEROL LABELING: (2) TO RESPOND TO CONSUMER DESIRES TO
BETTER DESCRIBE THE INGREDIENTS OF PROCESSED FOODS: AND
(3) TO IMPROVE THE MANNER OF PRESENTATION OF INFORMATION
TO CONSUMERS, I.E., IMPROVE THE FOOD LABEL AS A COMMUNI-

CATION DEVICE.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS INQUIRY IS CONFINED TO ONE AREA, I.E., CARBOHYDRATE LABELING. THE MATTER OF "SUGAR" LABELING IS VERY MUCH IN THE PUBLIC ARENA IN THE UNITED STATES AT PRESENT. IT IS A CONTROVERSIAL SUBJECT, BOTH AS RELATED TO

HEALTH ISSUES AND TO CONSUMER RIGHT-TO-KNOW ISSUES. CURRENTLY, OUR REGULATIONS PROVIDE FOR DECLARATION OF GRAMS OF DIGESTIBLE CARBOHYDRATES PER SERVING AS PART OF NUTRITION LABELS (VOLUNTARY EXCEPT WHEN NUTRIENTS ARE ADDED OR NUTRITION CLAIMS ARE MADE) AND FOR NON-QUANTITATIVE IDENTIFICATION OF INGREDIENTS IN DESCENDING ORDER OF PREDOMINANCE (EXCEPT WHEN THE INGREDIENT IS MANDATORY IN A STANDARDIZED FOOD). IN ADDITION, VOLUNTARY QUANTITATIVE DECLARATION OF THE CONTENT OF TOTAL COMPLEX CARBOHYDRATES AND TOTAL SUGARS IS WIDELY PRACTICED BY OUR BREAKFAST CEREAL INDUSTRY. FEW HEALTH CLAIMS ARE PERMITTED BY OUR REGULATIONS.

FDA THEREFORE, WOULD BE VERY MUCH INTERESTED IN LEARNING THE APPROACHES TO THESE MATTERS BEING TAKEN BY OTHER TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED NATIONS. HENCE, FDA WOULD BE MOST GRATEFUL TO RECEIVE INFORMATION FROM YOU CONCERNING (COUNTRY) LAWS, REGULATIONS, OR OTHER LEGALLY ENFORCEABLE PRACTICES BEARING ON CARBOHYDRATE LABELING. SPECIFIC UNCLASSIFIED

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SUBJECT AREAS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST INCLUDE:

(1) QUANTITATIVE DECLARATION OF CARBOHYDRATES, SUCROSE, OTHER SUGARS, OR SUGAR ALCOHOLS: IF QUANTITATIVELY DECLARED, IS IT IN TERMS OF INGREDIENTS AS ADDED OR IS IT EXPRESSED IN TOTAL SUGARS OR OTHER CARBOHYDRATE CONTENT IN THE FINISHED FOOD? HOW ARE QUANTITIES EXPRESSED, I.E., GRAMS, PERCENT BY WEIGHT, PERCENT OF CALORIES PER SERVING, CALORIES PER 100 CALORIES, ETC.?

(2) NON-QUANTITATIVE DECLARATION OF THE SAME TYPES
O - OF INGREDIENTS.

(3) PERMITTED OR SPECIFIED HEALTH CLAIMS, E.G., RELATIVE TO DIABETES MELLITUS OR DENTAL CARIES.

(4) SIMILAR LABELING APPROACHES TO OTHER MACRONUTRIENTS, I.E., PROTEIN OR FATS.

4. ANY ASSISTANCE POSTS CAN PROVIDE IN SECURING THE

REQUESTED INFORMATION WILL BE SINCERELY APPRECIATED. VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABELING, FOODS, SURVEYS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE089779
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JRWEINROTH,M.D.:MJ
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780151-0403
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780480/aaaacppw.tel
Line Count: 117
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 40f234b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN HEW
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3038058
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INTERNATIONAL FOOD LABELING SURVEY
TAGS: EIND, SWEL, TBIO, XX
To: STOCKHOLM OSLO MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/40f234b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014